

**RI State Conservation Committee**  
**17 Greenville, RI 02828-401-949-1480**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 26, 2005**

**9:15 AM**

**USDA/NRCS Conference Room**

**Eric called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.**

**In attendance were:**

**Members – Eric Offenbergs-Governor's Appointee, Paul Dolan-NRICD Appointee, Harriet Powell-SRICD Appointee, Gregg Cassidy-DEM Designee, Ted Comerford-ERICD Appointee.**

**Advisors – J Eric Scherer-NRCS, Ken Ayars-DEM Div of Ag and Kevin Nelson-Statewide Planning.**

**Chris Modisette-RC&D Coordinator, David Gregg-RI Natural History Survey, Gina DeMarco and Wendy Hoyle-NRICD.**

### **I. Minutes**

**Motion was made to accept the August 3rd meeting minutes.**

**Harriet/Gregg. Vote was unanimous.**

## **II. Natural History Survey-David Gregg**

**David spoke on what the Natural History Survey is doing. They are instrumental in preserving environmental information and compiling biodata onto a comprehensive data base. They sponsor**

**the RI Invasive Species Council and the bioblitz lecture series.**

**Current Projects are:**

**-An invasive species monitoring plan for the State of RI. They are trying to network existing information. They would like to identify state agencies so they can lead in coordinating a response**

**to this issue and provide legal and regulatory reviews.**

**-Natural Heritage Data Management System that will provide baseline information on habitat conservation efforts. This will be included in the Natural history data base. There is some RI Foundation funds for this project, but are looking for additional funding to continue updating the data base.**

**David is concerned that others see the importance of prioritizing invasive species.**

**The Invasive Species Council meets a couple times a year and would like to poll all**

**agencies to combine information on what is being done on**

**invasive species issues.**

**The State Committee supports their efforts and would like to assist the Natural**

**History Survey in disseminating the information. The Committee would write a**

**letter of support for funding requests. A draft of the Invasive Species Plan is**

**completed and David will forward the pdf file to the State Committee.**

### **III. Financial Report**

**-Districts Budgets and Financial Statements were reviewed by The Committee.**

**-RIACD Proposed budget was reviewed. The Committee requires that if they**

**contribute towards meetings and conferences for the Association then they will**

**need a written report given to the Committee. The Committee feels that staff**

**development and training is a priority and would like funds be available to all staff**

**and boards. If someone from one of the districts is attending a conference that**

**would benefit all districts they can then ask for financial support from the**

**Committee.**

**Ted reported that RIACD has been asked to organize the 2007 Eastern Regional**

**Meeting in August of that year. This will be put on next meetings agenda.**

**-NASCA Dues were discussed.**

**A motion was made not to support NASCA for one year and see if they respond to**

**The Committee not contributing and amend the budgeted \$775 for NASCA dues**

**and put it towards the 2007 Eastern Regional Conference. Harriet/Paul Vote was unanimous.**

#### **IV. Reports**

##### **a. Districts**

###### **NRICD**

**-A well water workshop will be held November 10th, from 7-9 at Ponaganset**

###### **High School**

**-The Annual Dinner will be Friday, November 4th at the Pines Restaurant.**

**Jane Sherman will be the keynote speaker. Eric has been chosen to receive the**

**Distinguished Service Award for his support of the district.**

**-A farm tour of 3 local farms was held Monday, October 3rd and a farmer was**

**chosen as the Farmer of the Year. Roylene was able to attend and meet several**

**of the board members and staff.**

**-Jean Lynch is writing a letter to Congressman Kennedy regarding the Farm Bill**

**meeting.**

**-NRICD is developing water festival kits that will be available to all water**

**districts.**

**-The 2006 Seedling Sale will include the sale of rain garden packages. The**

**district board toured the Woonsocket High School rain garden. The district**

**web site will also include detail information about rain gardens.**

**-The Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education calendars will be available next**

**week.**

## **SRICD**

**-The Southern District's annual dinner will be this evening with 70 persons registered to attend.**

**-New projects they are working on include:**

s EPA Sustainable Community Grant-working with the Indian community

on cultural food systems and how others grow food around the world.

s On November 4th-Davisville Middle School Project WET-making a splash for water resources

s Duck Cove-working with NRCS on continuing monitoring the salt marsh.

s Phase II implementation and outreach with RI DOT and Cooperative Ext

for the next 3 ½ years. This will include tours, training for municipalities and their staff and model ordinances state wide

s Phase II on Narragansett Stormwater project-have completed training for

s Working with DEM Div of Ag and NRCS on pinpointing farms to provide information to all farms on BMP's and the impact on the watershed.

s Mettatumet Beach stormwater system will be implement in the next 2 weeks.

-Kris Stuart is providing stormwater services to towns and attending state tech

meetings. Kevin Flynn, new Associate Director of Statewide Planning

introduced himself at the last meeting and said how he would like to provide

assistance at the local level. Alicia asked Eric if he would meet with Kevin

**Flynn and inform him about what the districts are doing.**  
**The Committee**  
**agreed that a meeting should be scheduled.**

## **ERICD**

**-The District's annual dinner is November 10th at the Sakonnet Fish Company**  
**and John McNiff will speak on How Pirates Effected the Narragansett Bay.**

**-Beef Marketing Project is going very well and have seen that there is a great**  
**demand for RI beef. A workshop was held for beef producers on the progress**  
**of marketing. The beef producers are anxious to move forward.**

**-20 acres of warm season grass has been planted at Pardon Grey.**

### **b. Chair**

**Eric reported that his meeting with Mike Sullivan went very well and Mike**  
**would like to see the districts get more involved with DEM in educational**  
**programs and other potential projects.**

### **c. Advisors**

## **Statewide Planning**

**-Kevin Flynn wants to see a more user-friendly land use plan, which the staff has started revising.**

**-Thursday, October 6th there will be a State Tech meeting at DOA at 9:00am.**

**-The tax assessor from Warwick is giving one of the farms a hard time about**

**FFOS values. The Committee suggested DEM write a letter to the tax assessor**

**reiterating the importance of farmland. Ken Ayars will look into this issue.**

**We discussed the importance of the FFOS Subcommittee meeting with**

**tax assessors regarding the importance of the program. Ken will forward letter from DEM.**

## **DEM Division of Ag**

**-DEM has purchased development rights on 4 properties, including Knights**

**Farm that will have it's closing this afternoon.**

**-There will be a tour of a cheese factory in NH. Kevin Breene has submitted a**

**bill to have cheese making legal in RI.**



**-URI will be hiring an extension agent for agricultural purposes. This job will be posted in a couple of weeks.**

**Eric needed to leave-discussed items needed to be covered before he left.**

**-NRICD-Paul Dolan has completed his signature papers to be appointed to the district**

**Motion was made to appoint Paul Dolan to the Northern RI Conservation District Ted/**

**Harriet Vote-4 in favor; Paul abstained.**

**-New Business**

**Calendar of Meetings**

**A calendar was presented to the State Committee and the dates were accepted. The**

**next State Committee meeting will be Wednesday, December 14th.**

**Paul presided over the meeting.**

**Reports resumed**

**NRCS**

**-Eric reported that Roylene apologizes for missing the meeting.**

**-Chris Modisette was hired as the new RC&D Coordinator on October 17th.**

**-They are working on their strategic business plan for the next year.**

**-Their budget is 12 million**

**-The Farm Bill Forum was very successful with 88 attending.**

**There was press**

**coverage and was talked about nationally how well RI's forum went.**

**-NRCS has received the conservation initiative grant of about \$500,000**

## **DEM**

**Gregg reported that there will be a public hearing for the Narragansett**

**Watershed bond fund on November 10th. Gregg will forward comments.**

## **RC&D**

**Chris distributed a detailed report on what RC&D has been doing and reviewed several projects.**

## **RIACD**

**The RI Association is planning a meeting in November.**

## **SRICD**

**Clark Collins is running for the 1 vacant seat on the District Board. there will be an election at the annual dinner.**

## **V. Old Business**

### **a. Agland Preservation Project**

**The draft of the new agland preservation rules and regulations will be heard publicly on November 16th. They still need to identify prioritize farms and outreach to land conservancies.**

### **b. Marketing Strategy**

**Southern has heard from 2 of the students and Northern has met with 1 of the students once and have not heard from them again. Eastern received an email, but nothing since.**

**Motion was made to adjourn at 11:50 am. Harriet/Ted Vote was**

**unanimous**